

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

October 22, 2009

Members Present:

Carl Brunetti, Sheila Chisholm, Bob Ericson, Cheryl Ethier, Hagop Jawharjian, Greg Leonard, Claudette Lussier, Linda Noble and Joe Renning.

Members Absent:

Jeremiah O'Grady.

Also in attendance: Town Moderator, Bob Ericson, introduced the newly appointed member from District 2, John Picozzi. Mr. Picozzi's will serve until the Financial Town Meeting. At that time, he may decide to seek election for the remainder of the term (until 2014).

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:43PM by Chairperson Linda Noble.

Pledge of Allegiance

Members stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

September 17, 2009 minutes were distributed and reviewed. Carl Brunetti made a motion to accept the minutes; Greg Leonard seconded the motion. Motion passed. (Bob Ericson and Hagop Jawharjian abstained. Sheila Chisholm had not yet arrived.)

Correspondence

Chairperson Noble stated that she had received an e-mail correspondence from Betty Robson, School Committee Chairperson. The subject of the e-mail was to inform the Budget Board that the Lincoln School Committee is exploring the feasibility of implementing an all-day kindergarten program. A recent article in The Valley Breeze also confirms this:
<http://www.valleybreeze.com/Freecomm/MAIN-L-school-consolidate> .

Public Comment

No one was present.

Old Business

Budget Board Vacancy, District 2

• Town Moderator, Bob Ericson, formally introduced his appointee from District 2, Mr. John Picozzi. Mr. Picozzi is employed by Blue Cross providing knowledge base support for field reps and business owners. Mr. Picozzi also has a background in mortgage financing. His education includes a BS from Salve Regina University with a major in criminal justice and a minor in psychology. He has done volunteer work for Rebuilding Together.

School Department Budget

- Linda Noble and Greg Leonard met with Superintendent Georgia Fortunato and School Committee Chairperson Betty Robson to express the Board's eagerness to work cooperatively in order to present a school budget that represents the community's expectations, the school department's needs and the town's ability to support both. Linda and Greg came away from the meeting encouraged by the exchange.
- Student enrollment will need to be studied. It appears that the Superintendent and the Town Administrator have drawn differing conclusions when it comes to enrollment numbers. Chairperson Noble asked Carl Brunetti to review the school enrollment numbers after the release of the official October Enrollment report. This item will then be further discussed at our November 19 meeting.
- Closely linked to the enrollment figures would be the School Personnel List. Carl will review all personnel, including those funded, if any, by stimulus dollars. This will also be further discussed at our November 19 meeting.
- The 2009 September monthly report and the September expense report was forwarded to all members in advance of the meeting. Upon review of the reports, it was decided that Linda Noble, Carl Brunetti and Cheryl Ethier would request a meeting with the school department to discuss the revised object codes. These changes (Uniform Chart of Accounts) will definitely affect our analysis when we attempt to compare previous-year numbers to current-year budget amounts.

- John Picozzi asked whether the municipal or school budget is responsible for maintaining town/school athletic fields. Members agreed that this has always been a contentious subject of discussion and in particular with regards to the tennis courts.

Municipal Budget

- Hagop Jawharjian and Jay O'Grady met with Town Administrator, T. Joseph Almond and Town Solicitor, Anthony DeSisto to discuss the "maintenance of effort" statute. Hagop stated that their discussion led to the question: "What happens in the event that the school department ends the year with a surplus?" The interpretation of this law will require further investigation and will likely be the subject of many discussions before we begin 2010-2011 budget deliberations.

New Business

Other

- Bob Ericson reminded members of the tentative nature of email correspondence as it relates to open meetings regulations.

Greg Leonard excused himself from the meeting at this point, due to a previous commitment.

- Bob Ericson discussed the possibility of forming an advisory group of people with specialized knowledge, who may not have time in their current situation to serve as a member, but may be willing to answer technical questions or share their expertise. He envisions a Budget

Resource Group (BRG) made up of people such as Roberta Gosselin and other former Budget Board members.

Linda Noble pointed out that the Budget Board has always welcomed the expertise of former Board members and there have been times when we have needed to seek them out. They have always willingly come forward.

Hagop Jawharjian suggested that we might host ‘in-service’ presentations by experts in order for all of us to gain a broader knowledge and better understanding of pensions, state law, Medicare reimbursement, etc.

Cheryl Ethier felt that we should first be able to identify a specific need requiring further detailed expertise before we go out and form a group that has no clear focus.

- We will need to contact the Lincoln Water Commission and the Lincoln Sewer Commission to ask them to prepare an annual financial statement and/or message to the taxpayer to be included with the Budget presented at the Financial Town Meeting.**

- Bob Ericson suggested that we consider presenting the Education bottom line in a more prominent fashion than we currently present this multi-million dollar item in our Budget booklet. Perhaps it could be accompanied with a brief explanation as to why the Budget Board’s proposal to the FTM is merely a bottom line number.**

Public Comment

No one was present.

Good and Welfare

It was noted that Bob Ericson cannot attend Thursday meetings that are scheduled on the 1st or 3rd Thursday of each month.

Adjourn

Joe Renning made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Hagop Jawharjian. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM.

cjl

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2009 at 7:30PM.